

## **REPORT TO THE PARISHIONERS OF MONKSTOWN PARISH FOR THE YEAR TO THE 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014**

Dear Parishioner,

As usual, please find attached information concerning the financial affairs of the Parish for the year to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2014.

I am happy to report that we have made some, albeit limited, progress in trying to close the gap between the Parish's income and expenditure during 2013/14.

Highlights I would like to bring to your attention include the following:

- 1) Funds collected and retained by the Parish increased by 18% to €113,448
- 2) Deficit on Parish Income and Expenditure Account eliminated for the year with a small surplus of €481.
- 3) Overall debt of Parish increased by 2.7% to €158,104.

As usual, I would like to expand on each of these points in turn. The welcome increase in the income of the Parish is due to significant increases in planned giving and donations and bequests, with the former up by 24% and the latter by 43%. This is a good result, although the figures for planned giving are flattered somewhat by a tax rebate which we did not receive in 2013. In relation to the donations and bequests, this was entirely due to the generosity of you the parishioners, and for that I want to thank you most sincerely.

In relation to the elimination of the deficit on the Income and Expenditure Account, I'm afraid this is somewhat illusory as, if you look closely at the numbers, you will see that there is no provision in the 2014 figures for the cost of annual insurance. This is due to the fact that we did not pay the premium this year until after the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and, if this was included, the result would be a deficit of just over €9k. While this is a major improvement on the 2013 figure of €23k, there is still work to be done to get back to breakeven or better, and this is essential as part of the process of reducing the debt of the Parish.

And let us not delude ourselves concerning the overall costs. As I've repeatedly said in previous years, there is very little scope for reducing these further if we wish to have a normally functioning service. In particular, given the size of the infrastructure of the church, it is wishful thinking to believe that a spend of €13k on repairs is going to be sufficient on an annual basis to preserve the integrity of the building, both inside and outside.

The increase in the debt of the Parish over the year arises from the expenditure of €6,655 on a capital item, an amount relating to a late payment for work carried out on the bell tower in 2011. This is excluded from the Income and Expenditure Account. While the amount is relatively modest, we are now getting close to our borrowing

limit with the bank. Interest costs are also going up because, as we reduce the term loan of the Parish, this is being replaced by short term debt which carries a much higher rate of interest. Hence the 24% increase in the interest charge figure in the Income and Expenditure account. It also means that money is extremely tight to carry out even modest repairs, and this accounts for the delay in getting the paintwork renewed down the side of the church. In addition, we have had to unexpectedly conduct repairs to the Parochial House after an attack of dry rot was uncovered. While this is being very cost effectively dealt with, it has further tightened our cash position.

In relation to the overall debt of the Parish, I would like to inform you that €40k of this is owed to a very generous parishioner, who lent it to the Parish three years ago to help pay the final instalment of the redevelopment of the Parochial House. He has charged no interest and has been extraordinarily patient in looking for his money back. We simply cannot abuse this generosity and must find a way of starting to repay. I will address this matter further in my address to you.

As I stated to you in my letter last year, the only realistic means we have of reducing the deficit is to increase the income of the Parish. In these difficult times, it is expecting a lot to ask people to give more, but I would again ask those of you who have standing orders to see if you could possibly afford even a small increase. It is a very effective way of donating as the Parish can claim the tax back, thus increasing the real contribution.

Those of you who find standing orders unsuitable, I would ask you to consider a further rebalancing of the means by which you contribute. The Parish simply has to increase the amount of contributions it retains to the point where it is at least covering its costs. While further progress was made on this issue, with the percentage of income retained increasing from 33% in 2013 to 39% in 2014, this needs to go further if we are to balance the books. Please think carefully about the means by which you contribute.

Thanks to your on going support, the Parish is able to continue providing services and support through both the Parochial House, the Parish Centre and the church itself. The generosity of parishioners in terms of both their time and financial contributions continues to amaze me. It is outstanding.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Parish Finance Committee, I would again like to thank you all for that continuing generosity. The green shoots which I hoped would start to appear in Ireland in 2014 have I believe done so, and let us hope that progress continues in 2015. A very happy Christmas to you all and best wishes for the coming year.

Kind Regards

Matt Minch

Chairman, Parish Finance Committee.